



# The Price of Westward Expansion

**Key Question:** What was the cost per square mile of the land purchased by the United States from Mexico after the U.S.-Mexican War?

**Relevance to Student Knowledge:** Students know that land is bought and sold and is very valuable.

**Student Learning Objectives:** Students will practice solving multiplication problems to determine perimeter and area.

## Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills

*History:* 7.4 (A,B) Identify events and issues during the Mexican War

*Mathematics:* 7.3 (B) Find solutions to application problems involving unit costs

*Mathematics:* 7.13 (A) Apply mathematics to other disciplines and mathematical topics

## Materials Included

- Master student worksheet **The Price of Westward Expansion**
- Teacher background information on U.S.-Mexican War and Battle of Palo Alto

## Teacher-Supplied Materials

- Copies of student worksheet **The Price of Westward Expansion**
- Real Estate section of a newspaper (**Optional:** Have students bring in newspapers.)
- Calculators

also agreed to sell its New Mexico and Upper California territories to the United States at a price of \$15 million. The treaty effectively halved the size of Mexico and doubled the territory of the U.S.

This territorial exchange had long-term effects on both nations. The war and treaty extended the United States to the Pacific Ocean, and provided a bounty of ports, minerals, and natural resources for a growing country. The abundance of lands also produced debates about extending slavery into the West, a dispute that would help spark a nation-defining civil war. In Mexico, the loss of battles and territories was a national trauma. As political and military leaders challenged each other on the best way to revive their troubled country, Mexico also descended into a long period of turmoil, civil war, and foreign intervention. But the war also inspired new leaders who were determined to avoid additional humiliation for their country. The new generation eventually united Mexico, forced out foreign invaders, and established the foundations of a modern state.

Perhaps the most enduring effect of the war is on U.S.-Mexican relations. While the war is recalled with passion south of the border, it is often overlooked to the north. And, although the two countries have developed strong bonds and friendly ties since 1848, these neighbors still struggle with distrust and misunderstandings created by the war, its effects, and the differing approaches to remembering the conflict.

**BACKGROUND:** On February 2, 1848, the United States and Mexico signed the treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo. In the Treaty, Mexico agreed to surrender all claims to Texas and accept the Rio Grande as the boundary of that state. Mexico

## LESSON

### Introduction

1. Tell students they will learn about land purchased by the U.S. from Mexico after the U.S.-Mexican War.
2. Define *real estate* or have students look up the definition.
3. Ask students: Why is real estate valuable? List responses.

### Guided Lesson

1. Hand the student worksheet  
**The Price of Westward Expansion.**
2. Allow students to look over the worksheet.
3. Discuss the following as a class:
  - What do I want to know? (**Historic price per sq. mile**)
  - What operations/equations will I use? (**Division**)
4. How will I set up the problem? (**Divide price by the amount of land**)

## MANAGEMENT

1. Make photocopies of the student worksheet **Land Transfer**.

### Vocabulary

- Real Estate: Property consisting of land and buildings

5. Tell students to complete the “Historic” column.
6. For the modern column, discuss the following as a class:
  - What do I want to know? (**Modern price per square mile**)
  - What operations/equations will I use? (**Multiplication**)
  - How will I set up the problem? (**Multiply the historic price by amount a dollar from that time is worth today**)
7. Ask students which land deal was the best.

### Discovery

1. Divide students into groups of three-four.
2. Pass out/have students get their newspapers or allow students to get on the Internet.
3. Tell students to compare current property prices to those of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.

### Wrap-up Activities

1. Have students share their answers with the rest of the class. Make sure students explain how they made their calculations.
2. Ask students: Based on current prices, how much should the U.S. paid for the land purchased after the War?

### Extensions:

1. Create a real estate ad for the land purchased by the U.S. from Mexico after the U.S.-Mexican War.

**Student Evaluation/Assessment:** Observe each student and check for his/her completion of the worksheet. Also observe each student for group and class participation.

## THE PRICE OF WESTWARD EXPANSION

Driven by Manifest Destiny, the U.S. moved west into new territories. Some land was won in wars. Other land was purchased from countries such as France, Mexico, and Russia.

Calculate the cost per square mile that the United States paid in the following land deals.



| EVENT                              | AMOUNT OF LAND    | COST          |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Louisiana Purchase (1803)          | 828,000 sq. miles | \$15 Million  |
| Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo (1846) | 500,000 sq. miles | \$15 Million  |
| Purchase of Alaska (1867)          | 586,412 sq. miles | \$7.2 Million |

| \$1 IN | IS WORTH THIS MUCH TODAY |
|--------|--------------------------|
| 1803   | \$25,950                 |
| 1848   | \$5,168                  |
| 1867   | \$1,495                  |

| EVENT                       | HISTORIC \$<br>PER SQ. MILE | MODERN \$<br>PER SQ. MILE | Put an X on the best<br>land deal. |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Louisiana Purchase          |                             |                           |                                    |
| Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo |                             |                           |                                    |
| Purchase of Alaska          |                             |                           |                                    |

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| EVENT                       | HISTORIC \$<br>PER SQ. MILE | MODERN \$<br>PER SQ. MILE | Put an X on the best<br>land deal. |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Louisiana Purchase          | \$18.12                     | \$470,108                 |                                    |
| Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo | \$17.12                     | \$88,477                  |                                    |
| Purchase of Alaska          | \$12.28                     | \$18,356                  | X                                  |